

M E D E A.

A

1508/624.

TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

WRITTEN BY

MR. GLOVER.

TAKEN FROM

THE MANAGER'S BOOK,

AT THE

Theatre Royal, Drury - Lane.

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. BUTTERS, No. 79, Fleet street; and sold by all
other Bookfellers in Town and Country.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

MEN.

Jafon,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Smith.
Æfon,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Palmer.
Creon,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Bensley.
Lycander,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren.
First Colchian,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Packer.
First Corinthian,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Griffiths.

WOMEN.

Medea,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Siddons.
Theano,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Hopkins.
Hecate,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Bransby.
First Phæacian.	-	-	-	-	

Colchians, Phæacians, Thessalians and Corinthians.

Scene in the Citadel of Corinth.

M E D E A.

ACT I. *Lycander seeing Theano advance from the Temple of Juno.*

THAT form divine, by all rever'd and lov'd,
Moves from the temple. On her pensive brow
Sits holy care with gentleness and grace,
Whose placid beams humanity reveal.
She stops contemplating the sea. Theano—
Why with that musing aspect tow'rd the main
Standst thou regardless of thy brother's voice?

Thea. Imperial Juno in an awful vision
This morn presented to my wondring sight
The shapes of strangers by distress pursu'd ;
Whom to the refuge of this holy place
I must receive obedient to her charge :
And lo ! a vessel turns her hast'ning prow
To Corinth's harbour.

Lyc. Ten well-measur'd strokes
Of her swift oars will reach the shore below :
But hear my errand. Creon knows, thy altar
Unclad with garlands still proclaims thy firmness
Against his daughter's marriage ; then prepare
Thy hallow'd eye to meet his threat'ning brow ;
Fence thy chaste ear against his impious vaunts,
Which urge th' example of Almighty Jove
For his own thirst of empire.

Thea. Say to Creon,
Kings should aspire to imitate the Gods
Not in their pow'r, but goodness ; human virtues
More nigh to Heav'n's perfection may be rais'd,
Than human grandeur : Jove derides the toil
Of mortal pow'r, but smiles on righteous deeds.

Lyc. Thus would I speak, Theano, could my words
And thoughts be tun'd in harmony like thine ;
But danger breaks that union in a palace,
And strains the tongue to discord with the heart :
Then pacify thy goddess, when the king
Exacts my service, if discretion wears
A mask of duty ; kindly thou impute
Blame to my station, and absolve Lycander.
But look ; yon vessel hath discharg'd its train,
Who climb the hill with aged steps and slow.
Nay turn thy eyes ; a second troop of strangers

March

March through the city. Sable is their garb,
Their mien dejected. This demands my care.
Farewel.

[Exit.]

Enter Colchians.

Thea. What forms are these? All-potent goddess!
I feel thee now!, my vision is accomplish'd.

First Colc. O thou, who seem'st the guardian of these
shades,

Which from the Isthmus shew their tow'ring growth,
The sailor's guide through Corinth's double main;
Permit an humble stranger to enquire,
What pow'r is worship'd here.

Thea. The very garb!
The figures painted in my recent vision!
Thy feet, O stranger, stand on sacred earth.

[Aside.]

These shades enclose the venerable fane
Erected there to hymeneal Juno,
Whose presence guards the citadel of Corinth.

First Colc. Then let us lift our suppliant voice unblam'd,
That in the refuge of this hallow'd grove
Our exil'd feet may rest.

Thea. Your suit is granted.
So wills the pow'r inhabiting that temple.
And say, ye favour'd of connubial Juno,
What are your names and country?

First Colc. From the banks
Of distant Phasis, and the Euxin wave,
Lost to our native mansions, are we come
Ill-guided Colchians to the walls of Corinth.
On king Æetes' daughter we attend,
That boast of Asia, to the Sun ally'd,
To Hecate and Circe, more illustrious
In her own virtues, for her wisdom known
Through ev'ry clime, the all-endow'd Medea.

Thea. Where is your princess?

First Colc. In that anchor'd bark?
Which to your haven from Iolcos sail'd;
Where on his specious embassy to Creon
Her husband left her on a lonely pillow.
At length impatient of his tedious absence
She and her sons have brav'd th' unsparing deep.

Thea. Yet more unsparing, than the deep, is man.
So will this daughter of affliction find,
When her sad feet are planted on this shore,

First Colc. How swift are evil things! While our keel

But



M E D E A.

But lightly touch'd that well frequented strand,
We heard, th' ungrateful Jason would divorce her
This day to wed the daughter of your monarch.

Thea. If heav'n prevent not. Through the solemn shade
Direct thy view. That high-rais'd altar note
Close by the fountain. Thither lead your princefs.
This is a refuge, which no regal pride
High swol'n with power, nor multitude inflam'd
By madding discord, nor invader's rapine
Have e'er profan'd. Return. Yon palace opens.
No friend of yours approaches. It is Creon.
Thou too be present, goddess, and illumine
The earth-born darkness of thy servant's mind.

(*Exeunt Colchians.*)

Enter Creon.

Creon. Why do they paint Medea's woes to me?
A king should lift his steady front on high,
And, while he gazes on the radiant throne,
Where bright ambition sits amid the stars,
The hopes, the fears, the miseries of others
Pass by unheeded in his contemplation.

Art thou come forth with those ill-omen'd looks
To blast the public festival?

Thea. Howl, howl,
Deluded city; banish from thy dwellings
The genial banquet; fill thy streets with mourners
To celebrate in notes of lamentation.
A nuptial day offensive to the gods.

Creon. Think'st thou, thy priestly office can avail
To counteract the high designs of kings?
Go and with bridal chaplets deck thy altar,
Lest thou provoke me to confound thy pride
Elate with wreaths of sanctity in vain.

Thea. Not that the holy fillet binds my temples,
Not, that before the altar I present
The public victim, or a nation's vows
By me are usher'd to th' eternal thrones,
Misjudging monarch, is my heart elate;
It is, that virtue owns me for her servant.
Benevolence and pity guide my will,
Beneficence and charity my deeds.
Ev'n now, though deem'd importunate and proud,
My soul bows down in heaviness for Creon,
And at his danger sighs in mournful warnings.

B

Creon.

Creon. Repeat thy warnings to the coward's ear.
My danger?

Thea. From that goddess, who inspir'd
The Colchian prince to desert her father,
To aid the Grecian heroes, and restore
Our lost possession of the golden fleece.
The voice of loud complaint from yonder beach
Already strikes her ear. Medea——

Creon. Ha!
What of Medea?

Thea. Is arriv'd in Corinth.

Creon. Arriv'd?

Thea. She and her children to reclaim
A husband and a father in that prince
Whom thou hast destin'd to Creusa's bed.

Creon. Thou, who obtain'st infinity of pow'r,
Lord of Olympus, king of gods and men,
Dost thou regard thy scepter'd sons below?
Say, shall a female hand o'erturn the basis,
Which I am founding to enlarge my sway?
If so, resume the diadem, I wear;
Its scanty circle I reject with scorn.

Thea. Ye winds, disperse impieties like these;
Nor let their sound profane the heav'nly threshold.

Creon. Hence to thy temple.

Thea. Thou defy'st not me,
But her, whose awful presence fills that temple—
Imperfect victims, inauspicious off'rings,
And sounds portentous have foreboded long
Her high displeasure. Her apparent form
Stood near my pillow at the op'ning dawn,
And strictly charg'd me to receive this stranger.
Think too, what lofty science arms Medea
With more than nature's force.

Creon. I think it false,
And all the faul'd wonders of her charms.
Thy legends too of inauspicious off'ring,
Imperfect victims, and portentous sounds,
What priests may publish, and a king despise.
Hence to the temple.

Thea. Farewel, rash prince. My duty is discharg'd.

Creon. Stay Dost thou mean to give this Colchian
refuge?

Thea. Can I dispute a deity's injunction?

Creon.

M E D E A.

Creon. Go dream again ; procure some wiser vision,
Which may instruct thee to avoid my wrath. [*Ex. Thea.*]

Enter Lycander.

Creon. Where hast thou loiter'd to conceal thy arrival
Of this accurt enchantress, and the purpose
Of thy rebellious sister to protect her ?

Lyc. My lord, these tidings are to me unknown ;
But further news of high import I bear.

Iolchian Æson, Jason's royal sire,
Advancing now anticipates this notice

Enter Æson with Thessians in mourning.

Creon. Thrice hail ! my double brother. Do I owe
Thy timely presence to our ancient friendship,
Or to th' alarm, Medea's flight might raise,
Who scarce precedes thy fortunate appearance ?
My sudden joy o'erlook'd that dusky robe.

Æs. It suits my fortune. Heavy with affliction,
My weary feet are banish'd from Iolcos.
How my fell brother, Pelias, that usurper
Of my paternal sway was foil'd and slain,
Thou know'st. His son retreated into Thrace :
Whence he hath pour'd a savage host of ruffians
With unexpected inroad and so rapid,
That instant flight alone preserv'd thy friend,
Thy suppliant now for aid.

Creon. Dismiss thy cares.
Soon shall thy war-like son display his banners,
Extend my frontier, and recover thine.
More of thy fortunes shalt thou tell-hereafter ;
But give to gladness this selected day
Of Jason's nuptials

Æs. Nobly thou reliev'st
A king's distress. Now satisfy the parent.
Lead me to Jason

Creon. Follow to my palace.

Lyc. He is not there.

Creon. What say'st thou ?

Lyc. On the sands

Alone with melancholy pace he treads,
As I but now descri'd him from this rock.

Æs. With melancholy pace ?

Creon. His promise binds him
This very morning to espouse Creusa.

Æs. Perhaps with fresh calamity o'erworn,
I doubt too much ; yet hear me.

Creon. Thy appearance
Removes all doubts. Lycander, find the prince.
Say, who is come to celebrate his nuptials.

Æf. (to Lycander.) Is he a stranger to Medea's land-
ing?

Lyc. I trust he is.

Æf. They must not meet.

Creon. Lycander,
See, thou prevent it. Send Theano to us;
And let her bring obedience: else her fault
Shall on thy head be punish'd.

[Exit *Lyc.*

Æf. Should my son
Once see Medea!

Creon. Can her looks annul
A league like ours?

Æf. Alas! thou little know'st her.
Her eyes surpasses that refulgent star,
Which first adorns the evening; and her talents
Exceed her beauty.

Creon. Why art thou startled?

Æf. She is there—ascending;
My sight acquainted with her haughty steps
Shrinks, ere they touch the summit of this hill.

Creon. Which is the far-fam'd sorceress of Colchis?

Æf. Too well distinguish'd by her stately port,
And elevation o'er that weeping train,
She tow'rs a genuine off-spring of the gods.
Rage on her brow, and anguish in her eye
Denounce the growing tempest of her mind.

Creon. Now, god of waters, since thy partial hand
Thrusts this barbarian outcast on my shores,
Back to thy floods the fugitive I spurn.

Æf. What means my royal friend? Retire. Avoid
This formidable woman, who may wound
Our dignity. I know her soaring mind,
Which all enlighten'd with sublimest knowledge
Disdains the state and majesty of kings,
Nor ranks with less, than deity itself.

Creon. Curse on her beauty, and majestic mien!
But let the rumor of her pow'r be true;
The sun, her boasted ancestor, may arm
Her hand with fire; let Hecate and Circe,
The goddesses of spells, and black enchantments,
Attend her steps, and cloath her feet in terror:
We have our fiends; the sorceress shall find,

Tha

M E D E A.

9

That grief, despair, distraction wait our nod
To wring her heart through all her magic guards. *[Exit.]*
Enter Medea, her two children, Colchians and Phæacians.

Med. No more, I charge you. Noble minds oppress'd
By injuries disdain the sound of comfort.

Ye fiends and furies wont to leave your flames

At my command, and tremble at my charms,

Now, now ascend and aid Medea's rage.

Give me the voice of thunder to resound

My indignation o'er the earth and heav'n's;

That I, who draw my lineage from the sun,

Am fall'n below the basest lot of slaves:

That anguish, want, despair, contempt and shame

Are heap'd together by the hands of fate,

Whelm'd in one mass of ruin on my head,

And dash my struggling virtue to the ground.

First Co's. Why to our faithful counsels art thou deaf?

Med. Canst thou by counsel waft my exil'd feet

To my lost parents, my forsaken friends,

And native palace?—Oh! I gave him all;

To him my virgin bosom I resign'd,

For him the regal mansion of my father,

The lov'd companions of my youth deserted;

From foul defeat, from shame, from death I sav'd him:

What more could woman?—Yet he weds another.

Me he abandons, and these helpless infants

Forlorn, unshelter'd in a foreign clime,

To ev'ry outrage, ev'ry want expos'd.

First Colc. Though stung with just resentment, due
regard

Pay to my age, fidelity and service.

A long and painful traverse from Iolcos

Hast thou endur'd, nor since thy landing here

The needful succour known of rest or food.

Med. Talk not to me of nourishment and rest.

Food to these lips, and slumber to these eyes

Must ever now be strangers.

First Colc. By the beams

Of thy forefather never will I see

Thy wisdom bound in vassalage to passion.

Once more I warn thee, princess, to thy refuge.

This is the consecrated bow'r of Juno.

Thou underneath the hospitable shade

Sit suppliant down.

Med. Improvident Medea!

To raise another from destruction's depths,
 To wealth, to glory raise him, yet thyself
 Leave destitute and suppliant! Oh! what art thou,
 Whom blinded men unerring wisdom call?
 Thou couldst not pierce the thin, the airy veil,
 Which from my eyes conceal'd the paths of danger;
 Nor canst thou now repel th' increasing storm
 Of rapid anguish, which o'erturns my peace:
 Down to the endless gloom of dreary night:
 Hence let me drive thee from my inmost soul.
 That nothing calm may hover nigh my heart
 To cool its pain, and save me from destruction. [Exit

ACT. II Jason *advancing from the end of the stage.*

Theano on one side, Medea in the grove.

Thea. THE princely steps of Jason are in sight.

He scarce conjectures, that th' indignant breast
 Of her, he injures, pours from yonder shades
 Its high ton'd anguish. Yet, illustrious false one,
 What stinging thoughts distort thy manly fame!
 How have thy gestures lost their wonted grace
 In this keen struggle with upbraiding conscience!
 Thou soon before that inward judge arraign'd
 Shalt hear me plead thy wrong'd Medea's cause.

Jas. Press'd by a father's absolute decree,
 Solicited by Corinth's potent lord,
 Aw'd with the specious sound of public good,
 I have consented, and the hour is nigh.
 Oh! in some future hour of sad reflection
 May not my heart with self reproach confess,
 This plea of public welfare was ambition;
 And filial duty was a feeble tie
 To authorise the breath of sacred vows.

Med. (in the grove.) Ungrateful Jason!

Jas. Whence proceeds this voice? [wrongs.

Med. (in the grove.) O sire of light, thou seest my

Jas. Again?

Imagination pregnant with remorse
 In sounds unreal yields its birth of terror. [faith,

Med. (in the grove.) Ye arbiters of oaths, and plighted
 O Jove and Themis, hear!

Jas. It is a voice!

Resembling hers, when she alas! is far:
 No mockery of fancy. (*Leans against the Scene*

Thea. (advancing.) On his cheek

Health

Health seems to wither. O'er his shaded sight
The shriv'ring eye-lids close. A creeping tremor
O'erspreads his fading lips, and dewy limbs.
Bless'd be these signals of returning virtue.

Hail! prince. Why stand'st thou listening? what
alarms thee?

Jas. An awful murmur from offended heav'n
Through yonder branches issu'd in a voice,
Which chill'd my spirit, and unnerv'd my strength.

Thea. What didst thou hear?

Jas. Medea's well known accents
Thrice did the vocal prodigy repeat,
Though seas divide her from these faithless arms.

Thea. There is no need of prodigy. Mere nature
In thy own breast will startle, when thou know'st,
It was Medea's self, who call'd on Jason.

Jas. Herself!

Thea. The injur'd daughter of Æetes,
But newly-wafted from Thealia's shore,
Thou may'st discover through those parting bough:
Where she is seated near the fountain's brink
With her pale cheek reclining on the altar.

Jas. (looking on the grove.) Stern deities of vengeance,
and of justice!

Now pass your sentence, Nemesis and Themis!
My ill-wrought web of hated life unravel,
Which was not wove for happiness.

Thea. Be patient.

Jas. Peculiar woes through ev'ry stage of being
Were Jason's portion. Early I beheld
My father's crown usurp'd. My youth subjected
To an insidious tyrant was devoted
A sacrifice in Colchis—So he hop'd,
And I wish now!—I triumph'd—Glory follow'd,
The source of new calamity to me.
Where is that glory? Serving selfish kings,
Abetting falshood, perjury and fraud.

Thea. Turn thy attention from thy own distress
To feel, what others suffer by thy frailty,
Thy wife and off-spring. Listen.

Jas. I obey.

Thea. How could'st thou lead this all-excelling prince
From clime to clime, th' associate in thy toils,
To fall the victim in a foreign land
Of those unrighteous statutes, which appoint

Imperious

Imperious husbands masters of divorce;
 How think, th' establish'd practice of the Greeks,
 Or all, which varnish'd policy might plead,
 Could e'er absolve thee from a solemn tie
 With such uncommon obligations bound
 By those superior, those unwritten laws,
 Which honour whispers to the conscious heart?

Jaf. O venerable woman, lend thy aid.

Thea. Atone thy fault. Repentance is heroic,
 And holds its rank among the manly virtues.

Jaf. Yes, I renounce Creusa, and her kingdom.
 Yet see this breast with new born terror beat.
 Not all my trials through unnumber'd dangers
 From monsters, famine, from the raging deep,
 And dark brow'd care have so confirm'd my courage,
 But that I tremble at th' impending conflict.

Enter Lycander.

Lyc. The king, Theano, summons thee before him.

Thea. What time?

Lyc. This instant.

Thea. I obey his pleasure.

Jaf. Thou wilt not leave me.

Thea. Thou hast heard this summons.

Heed my last words. Maintain thy just resolves.

Lycander, let thy conduct leave no room

For my reproaches, and the wrath of Juno.

Lyc. Fear not; thy counsels shall be treasur'd here.

(Exit Theano.)

Long have I sought thee, prince. The royal Æson
 Is now in Corinth, and will soon accost thee.

Jaf. My father here! Why multiply distress,
 Accumulate perplexity and shame
 On my devoted head, ye righteous pow'rs!

Lyc. Prince, he is near: and I return to Creon. *(Exit.)*

Enter Æson.

Jaf. Amaz'd, distracted, tortur'd, I retain
 My veneration here. O sacred head,
 What from thy peaceful habitation calls
 Thy silver hairs to these abodes of woe?
 Or com'st thou wrapt in sable to lament
 Our mutual errors, and dishonour'd names?

Æs. Why I am here, why bearing this apparel,
 Too soon will Jason know. But first reply;
 Why on the seas waste margin was my son
 Observ'd to trace his solitary path;

When

M E D E A.

When Corinth pauses in her gen'ral gladness,
Her choral songs and minstrelsy suspending
For Jason's absence?

Jas. Better she should wait,
Whole ages wait, than justice be suspended,
And the return of honour be unwelcom'd.

Æs. Can I interpret these mysterious words?

Jas. Hast thou not heard, my father, that Medea
Weeps in that bow'r, invoking Jove and Themis
To witness what returns she meets from Jason?

Æs. What most I dreaded. Then my aged limbs
Must wear these garments still unchang'd, thy country,
Thy friends, thy father's house unceasing mourn.
The woes of exile more severe, than time,
Indent the furrows deeper on these brows.

Jas. The woes of exile?

Æs. Yes, the race of Pelias
Force me to Corinth. Young Acastus reigns,
The gen'rous Creon promises his aid?
That aid will Jason cruelly prohibit?

Jas. Then we begin to reap the bitter harvest
From seeds, which selfish policy had sown.
When I was hurried to these fatal walls,
And, gall'd with jealous fear, Medea left thee;
Heav'n in that period from the roll of fortune
Eras'd our titles, and the with'ring scepter
Shrunk from thy grasp.

Æs. Nay look not thus entranc'd.
What draws thy eye?

Jas. She rises from the grove,
As sun disfigur'd by a mist of sorrow,
Rais'd from our crime. Awake thee—What remains,
But that we fall before our known protectress,
Confessing both in Jove's offended sight,
How much of weak inconstancy hath stain'd
My name of hero, what ignoble guile
Disgrac'd thy regal head?

Æs. And who must save Iolcos?

Jas. She. Medea's gen'rous wisdom,
Which in itself contains the strength of armies,
And quell'd old Pelias, can dethrone the son.

Æs. What phrenzy guides thee? Follow me to Creon.

Jas. Rest thou with me.

Æs. Inhuman! dost thou covet
To see my age and dignity revil'd?

I charge

I charge thee follow.

Jas. Riveted, I wait,
As if congenial with this rock I grew
From its foundations, till Medea come.

Æs. Revolter! she is coming—But my eye
Shall not be far. Remember, thou dost hazard
Thy country's love, perhaps thy father's too. *(Exit.)*

Enter Medea, Colchians and Phæacians,

Jas. How shall I face her injur'd worth, how chuse
The most auspicious moment to accost her?

Med. Why have I science to command the moon,
To draw the spirits from the realms of night,
And trace the hidden pow'rs of baneful nature?
Why am I wife, unless to feel my sorrows
With sharper sensibility, and prove,
How weak is wisdom struggling with despair?

First Colc. Its succour yet solicit. Wisdom smooths
Each thorny path, and Virtue is her sister.

Med. Old man be silent. Hath Medea's grief
The leisure now to hear thy moral tale?
No, let me loath my being, and upbraid the heav'ns,
That I was ever born. I will exclaim;
I will demand, ye unrelenting powers,
Why your injustice terrifies the earth
With such an image of distress, as mine.

Jas. This interview I see in all its terrors;
But further pause will turn suspense to madness.

Medea—I am come

Med. And dar'st thou come
With that unmatch'd ingratitude and falshood
To face the constant worth, thou now betray'st?

Jas. I come to lay my errors in thy view.

Med. No, to my view display Creusa's beauty;
Dwell on her merit, who excels Medea.

Jas. The deity presiding o'er that temple
I call to witness, that my father's pleasure——

Med. And dost thou urge thy father, thou perfidious?
Thy father! Oh! that I had been thus wise,
And ne'er forgot the duty of a child.

Thy father gave thee a precarious being,
In its first flight of glory doom'd to fall
Fresh in its prime a victim to oblivion,
Had not I sav'd and borne thee to renown.

Jas. Jason's life and glory are thy gifts.

Med. I gave thee too my love, my virgin love,

M E D E A.

My friends, my country, my unspotted fame,
My joy, my peace, all, all on thee bestow'd;
What could a father more? Him too my power
Snatch'd from oppression, and his treach'rous brother,
Usurping Pelias slew, that cruel Pelias,
Who on thy youth impos'd the dang'rous toil,
Whence I preserv'd thee—but, my wrath, be still.
Inconstant, base alike, both son and sire
Deserve my scorn.

Jas. Shall contumelious harshness
Blot those perfections from the sun deriv'd,
And not one moment to thy wisdom yield,
That thou may'st hear me?

Med. No, thou most ingrate
Of all, who e'er forgot their benefactors.
When the fam'd Argo fraught with Grecian princes
Pierc'd with its beak the sandy verge of Phasis,
What daring hand, but mine, their trophies rais'd?
The golden fleece amid th' enchanted grove
Had hung untouch'd beside its scaly guardian;
Wild dogs and vultures had devour'd your limbs;
Your bones had whiten'd on the Colchian strand.
I fearless slept between the narrow bounds,
Which parted your devoted lives from fate,
With mystic spells entranc'd the sleepless dragon,
Bent to the yoke the brazen-footed bulls,
And gave you safety, victory and fame.

Jas. I own thy merits; and the deep remembrance—

Med. For ever be detested that remembrance.
Curs'd be the skill, which fram'd your fatal bark,
Accurs'd the gale, which fill'd her spreading canvas;
But doubly curs'd the hour, the hour of ruin,
When first I view'd that smiling treach'rous form,
And fondly trusted to the fair delusion.

Jas. I feel thy anguish, daughter of Æetes,
Which would o'erwhelm me, had I less to offer,
Than my repentant heart.

Med. Thy purjur'd heart
Soul with ingratitude and guilt. Avaunt,
And give it thy Creusa; I despise thee.

Jas. Think, who I am. Though criminal I stand
And mourn my fault, forget not, I am Jason
By fame in brightest characters recorded.
Deserving thy reproaches, I endur'd them;
But sure the lustre of my name is proof
Against contempt.

Med.

Med. The recompence of falshood.

Jas. Hold, I conjure thee!—Nay, I will be heard.
When first I sail'd for Corinth, all my purpose
Was to establish by a league with Creon
Th' unstable throne of Thessaly, since crush'd
By fierce Acastus. Æson's strict injunction
To wed Creusa follow'd my arrival;
When thou wert distant from my sight, and Creon
Would grant his friendship—

Med. But by thy disgrace.

Jas. Impatient woman!

Med. Could a king's protection
Be rank'd with mine, thou weakly perju'd man?

Jas. Thou shalt not stop me by th' immortal gods!
I will proceed—No other form of beauty,
No qualities, or talents to thy own
Have I preferr'd. By empire's glaring bubble,
By policy's ensnaring voice misled,
Or by mistaken duty to a parent,
I swerv'd from sacred faith. At thy approach
Light flashes through my error; to thy feet
Contrition brings me, no ignoble suppliant:
The scourge of tyrants, vanquisher of monsters,
Thy instrument of glory, now most glorious,
That he subdues himself, implores thy pardon.

Oh! unadvis'd! Obdurate! While I sue,
Thy unforgiving brow returns disdain.
Think of thy children!

Med. Traitor, dar'st thou name them?

Jas. Beware; destruction with a hunter's speed
Pursues us both. Inextricable snares
Are spreading round us—Ha! be calm—Provoke
Ill fate no farther—Weigh in wisdom's balance
The pow'ful obligations, which assail'd me. (same,

Med. Can they be weigh'd with conquest, life and
The vast profusion of my bounty on thee,
Thou weak, thou blind, insensible and base?
No, my superior soul shall stoop no more.
Though once from foul defeat and death I sav'd thee,
I will not raise thee from thy grov'ling falshood.
Let fortune's whole malignity pursue me,
I and my children wretched, as we may be,
Outcast, derided by the barb'rous herd,
Spurn'd by th' unpit'ing proud, with grim despair,
With beggary and famine our companions

M E D E A.

17

Will wander through th' inhospitable world,
Nor ev'n amidst our complicated woes
E'er think of thee, perfidious, but with scorn.

[*Exeunt Medea, Colchians and Phæacians.*

Enter Jason

Jas. Then let the tempest roar, tyrannic woman,
The billows rise in mountains o'er thy head.

Æs. Well thou hast seen her; while thy father's eye
Ach'd at the low submission of a hero,
Who with unmollify'd disdain was spurn'd.
Say will my gentle son persist to court
The fellowship of fury, and abide
The acrimonious taunt, the settled frown,
The still-renew'd upbraiding? Will my Jason
For this to deathleis obloquy abandon
His name of hero, while his arm rejects
A proffer'd aid to reinstate his father,
Redeem his country, and refresh his laurels
With want of action fading?

Jas. There, O Mars,
Thou dost provide a banquet for despair.

Æs. No, for thy valour, son, a feast of glory.
Come, leave this melancholy spot. Return
With me to joy.

Jas. I go—but never more
Speak to thy son of joy. My soul foregoes
All gentle thoughts. Its sad relief is horror
From the grim pow'r of homicide and ravage.

O that this ev'ning, lighted by the stars,
And glimpse of armour, I might turn my back
On Corinth's bulwarks; that the trumpet's clangor,
The shrill-mouth'd clarion, and the deep-ton'd horn,
The groans of slaughter, and the crash of spears
Might blend their discord for my nuptial song. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. *Enter Theano and the First Colchian.*

First HOPE in its bud was blasted by her anger.

Colc. *Thea.* Unhappy anger! but her wrongs are
great;

Nor is my pity less. Instruct me, Colchian,
Was she not fam'd for hospitable deeds?

First Colc. Oft hath her known benignity preserv'd
The Grecian strangers on our barb'rous coast.

Thea. Yet now a Grecian prince denies her shelter.
Well introduce me to her.

C

First

First Colc. Restless anguish
Will soon transport her hither. Look, she comes.
Here let us watch some interval of calmness.

Thea. Are those her children?

First Colc. Yes, from Jason sprung

Thea. They too with intermingling tears enhance
The piteous scene. Thou fair and stately tree,
Who once so proudly didst o'ertop the forest,
What cruel hand despoils thee of thy honours?
Now dost thou show, as blasted by the lightning,
With all thy tender branches with'ring round.

Enter Medea, her two Children, Colchians and Phæacians.

Eldest Child. Why fly'st thou from us? Wherefore dost
thou frown

Whene'er we name, or ask to see our father?

Med. You have no father!

Eldest Child. When we left Iolcos,
Didst thou not tell us, he was here in Corinth?
Now we have pass'd the frightful sea, what hinders
But we may find him?

Med. Never find him more
To you a parent, or to me a husband.

Eldest Child. Alas, thou weep'st.

Med. You too must learn to weep,
Ye destin'd wand'ers in the vale of mourning.
Why do you lift your infant eyes to me?
Your helpless mother cannot guard your childhood,
Nor bid neglect and sorrow stand aloof.

I once had parents—Ye endearing names!
How my torn heart with recollection bleeds!
You too perhaps overflow your aged cheeks,
Rend from your heads the venerable snow,
Oft as your lost Medea is recalled,
And for a hapless offspring mourn like me.

First Colc. Heart breaking sorrow now succeeds to rage.
Turn, royal mistress; see the holy priestess.

Med. Hail! most humane.

Thea. To Juno render praise.

Med. She owes me refuge. Prompted first by Juno,
I left my native Phasis, and convey'd
Back to her favour'd clime the golden fleece.
Thy part was all humanity.

Thea. Sage princess,
Hear me divulge the menaces of Creon
To drive thee hence. Expect his presence soon.
Fear not his anger. Warranted by Juno,

By my high function, by my nature more,
I gave thee, I continue my protection.

Med. Turn to these infants thy benignant looks.
Them to secure from trouble and the terrors,
Which gather closely on the steps of time,
Is all their mother's care; at whose entreaty
Do thou receive their innocence in charge:
But leave Medea to her own protection.

Eldest Child. Our father long hath left us. By thy side,
And in thy bosom we had comfort still.
Wilt thou forsake us?

Med. We will meet again.
Remove them from me. I can bear no longer
To view those mirrors, which reflect the image
Of my distress, and multiply my pains.

Thea. Weep not, my children.

Med. Hide their melting softness;
Lest they dissolve the vigor which must save them.

(Medea continues weeping.)

Thea. Come, lovely mourners, rest a while with me.
Come and be practis'd to repeat your vows
For this most wrong'd of mothers. You shall lift
Your blameless hands, sweet supplicants, shall kneel
To nuptial Juno, and to rev'rend Themis,
The arbitress of oaths, and plighted faith.
The dove-like voice of your untainted age,
Thus visited by undeserv'd affliction,
May win their guardian mercy. *(Ex. with the children.)*

Med. Are they withdrawn?

First Col. They are.

Med. Then, mighty spirit,
Once more at least thy majesty shall blaze
Such as thou wert amid th' enchanted wood;
When thou didst summon hell's reluctant pow'rs,
And hell obey'd; when dark'ning from her car
The moon descended, and the knotted oak
Bent with thy charms, which tam'd the wakeful dragon,
And safety gave to demi gods and heroes.

First Col. Behold the king.

Enter Creon, Lycander and Attendants.

Med. Why comes the king of Corinth
To break upon my sorrows?

Creon. To debate, weak woman,
Is thy known province; to command is mine.
Be seen no longer in the bounds of Corinth.

Med. And who art thou dost give Medea law,
And circumscribe the slenderest spot on earth
Against her passage? Unconfined as winds
I range with nature to her utmost bounds;
While, as I tread, mankind reveres my steps,
Its hidden powers each element unfolds,
And mightiest heroes, anxious for renown,
Implore Medea's favour. What is Creon,
Who from the sun's descendant dares withhold
The right to hospitality and justice?

Creon. Not of the number who revere thy steps,
Or supplicate thy favour: one whose scepter
Forbids thy residence in Greece. Away;
Range through the snows of Caucasus; return
To Pontic deserts, to thy native wilds:
Among barbarians magnify thy deeds.
This land admits no wand'rer like Medea,
Who with a stranger from her father fled,
Fled from her country, and betray'd them both.

Med. With him I fled, whom thou wouldst foully draw
Through blackest treason to thy daughter's bed;
And for the rest, if equity or wisdom
Were Creon's portion, I would plead before him;
But vindicate my actions to a robber,
Who basely watch'd my absence to purloin
My only wealth! my lofty soul disdains it.

Creon. Hence, while thou may'st, rash woman, ere
thou prove
How strong the awful image of the gods
Is stamp'd on monarchs, and thou feel my wrath
Swift in destruction like the bolt of Jove.

Med. Dost thou recount thy fables to Medea,
The idiot tale, which cheats the gaping vulgar,
To her who knows the secret source of things?
Behold this comely image of the gods.
This violater of the holiest ties,
Whom the dull hand of undiscerning chance
Hath deck'd in purple robes, and pageant gold,
Resembles much the majesty of heav'n.

Creon. Thy bare expulsion shall not now atone.
I will stand forth th' avenger of Ætes
On his false daughter; for thy crimes in Colchis
Vindictive furies in this distant region,
Shame, chastisement and insult shall o'ertake thee,
Spoil that fair body, humble that fell heart;

Till

M E D E A.

Till, as with bitt'rest agony it breaks,
Thou curse its wild temerity, which brav'd
The pond'rous hand of majesty incens'd.

Med. Ha! thou vain boaster, hast thou yet to learn
That I can rock the iron throne of Pluto;
Can waft thee struggling to Rhiphaean crags,
Where thou shalt rave and foam and gnash thy teeth;
Where frost shall parch thee, where the clouds shall scat-

ter

Their storms around thee, whirl in sportive air
Thy gorgeous robe, thy diadem and scepter?
While I—Oh! fruitless, unsubstantial pow'r!
Must still continue wretched—Oh! vain threat!
Hath he not torn my Jason from these arms?
What then avails the knowledge of my mind?
Stretch'd on the rack of anguish is my heart.
What spark of wisdom in my breast remains?
All is extinguish'd there—Oh! Jason! Jason!

[Is supported by her women.]

Creon. (to *Lycander*) Thou see'st the haughty forcerels
abash'd

Before a monarch's preserving frown.

Lyc. (aside) Most injur'd woman!

Creon. Go, transport her hence,
Ere she revive.

Lyc. The multitude already
Begin to murmur; were this holy place
Defil'd by force, their zeal would swell to madness.
Perhaps this princess for her wisdom fam'd
May be persuaded to abandon Corinth.
And she revives with milder looks.

Med. (Aside) Pride, pride,
For once be wise; in lowliness disguise thee,
That thou may'st rise to vengeance. King of Corinth,
I only crave three hours to quit thy borders.

Creon. (to *Lycander*) If she exceed that slender space of
time,

Force shall remove her from my loathing sight. (Exit.

Lyc. This contest princess, thou hast wisely clos'd.

Three hours elaps'd, expect me to return
Thy safe conductor to the kingdom's frontier. (Exit.

First Col. Thou dost not droop. This tyrant's empty
threats

Thy very breath could dissipate like clouds,
Which for a-while some hideous form assume,

Then pass away dissolv'd to fleeting vapor.
 I too will aid thee. By thy father's sister
 I was held dear, by Circe, pow'rful queen,
 Who taught me various spells and incantations.

Med. Go then, and bring my wand, that potent rod,
 Which grew a branch of ebony o'er shading
 The throne of Pluto; sever'd thence, and dipt
 Thrice in the cold of Lethe's sleepy waters
 By Hecate on Circe was bestow'd,
 By her on me to still the winds and floods,
 Night's drowsy curtains o'er the sky to draw,
 And all its active fires entrance to rest.
 Leave us apart. Retire, my faithful virgins,
 Who share so kindly in Medea's woes.

I would not pierce your gentle hearts with terror.

[*Exeunt omnes præter Med. and first Colc.*]

Med. (*Waving her wand.*) First, rise ye shades imper-
 vious to the sight;
 And you, ye sable-skirted clouds descend:
 Us and our mystic deeds with night surround.

(*The stage is darken'd.*
(Iambics.))

Thou, by whose pow'r the magic song
 Charms from its orb th' unwilling moon,
 Controls the rapid planet's speed,
 And dims the constellation's fires;
 Terrific deity, whose name,
 And a'tar stain'd with human blood
 On Tauric-cliffs the Scythian wild,
 And fell Sarmatian tribes adore;
 In thy raven-tinctur'd stole,
 Grasping thy tremendous brand,
 With thy howling train around,
 Awful Hecate, ascend.

First Colc. By the pitchy streams of Styx,
 Lethe's mute and lazy flood,
 By the dreadful vapor sent
 From Avernus' steaming pool;
 By th' eternal sigh, which heaves
 With Cocytus' m' urnful wave,
 By the Phlegethontic blaze,
 Direful goddess, hear and rise.

Med. No more. The strong constraining spell hath
 tam'd
 The restiff blast; the pliant leaves are fix'd;
 The fountains rest; th' oblivious birds are hush'd;

And

And dead the billows on the silent beach.
 Begone—She comes—I feel the rocking ground.
 Its entrails groan—Its shiv'ring surface parts
 Scarce can Æetes' child the sight endure [*Ex. First Colc.*
Hecate rises in long, black garments, with a wreath of
snakes, and oaken boughs on her head, and a torch in her
hand.

Med. O my propitious and congenial goddess,
 Who thy mysterious science hast diffus'd
 Of potent herbs, and necromantic songs
 Through my capacious bosom: who so long
 Hast been assistant to Medea's triumphs.
 Now thou behold st me vanquish'd by despair.

Hec. I know thy sufferings, daughter; but to close
 The wounds of anguish, and assuage despair
 Is not the task of hell.

Med. Then give me vengeance.

Hec. On whom?

Med. Creusa?—No—my high revenge
 O'erleaps a trifling maid. Old Æson?—No,
 He is my hero's father. But for Creon

Hec. The hour is nigh, when yonder flood will rage,
 This rock be loosen'd, and its strictures nod;
 Then shall the fury, discord, and red zeal,
 Thrice steep'd in Stygian fires, avenge thy wrongs
 Farewel.

Med. A moment stay—My yielding heart
 Must ask—Will Jason ever more be kind?

Hec. Search not thy fate.

Med. Unfold it, I enjoin thee
 By him, thou dread'st, by Demogorgon's name.

Hec. Against thyself, unhappy, thou prevail'st.
 Ere night's black wheels begin their gloomy course,
 What thou dost love shall perish by thy rage;
 Nor thou be conscious when the stroke is given:
 Then, a despairing wand'rer must thou trace
 The paths of sorrow in remotest climes. [*She descen's.*]

Med. Destroy my love! By me shall Jason die?

Oh! insupportable! O pitying Juno!

Assist me sinking to the ground with anguish.

Falls to the ground.

Enter Colchians and Phæacians.

First Colc. The streaming purple of the western Sun
 Glows on these tow'rs and pinnacles again,
 Prevailing o'er the darkness, which the wand

Of

Of our sage mistress rais'd—Dejecting sight!
Thy faithful servant can restrain no longer,
But tears must wash the furrows of his cheeks.

Med. Ah! how much more my eyes should stream in
torrents!

Ah! how much stronger should my bosom heave,
And sound its agonies in bitter groans
To the remorseless gods! Destroy my Jason! [*Starting up.*
The dear, false hero! Perish first my art.

First Phœa. Hast thou not magic to constrain this
wand'rer

Back to thy arms?

Med. I have, but scorn the arts
Which may command his person, not his love.
No, fly to Jason. Let the only charm
Be soft persuasion to attract him hither.
O he is gentle as the summer's breeze,
With looks and gestures fashion'd by the graces.
The messenger be thou, discreet and good.
Medea's pride shall sleep.

First Co's. [Aside.] I go—though hopeless.

Med. Mean time will I to yonder wood return,
And some deep shaded receptacle chuse.
There, wrapt in darkness, shall my suffering soul
The sense of all its injuries disburthen
In secret murmurs, till its rage be spent.

(Exit)

A C T IV. Enter Jason and the First Colchian.

Jas. WHY am I summoned?

First Colc. But once more to greet her.

Jas. And be the mark of scorn.

First Colc. Remind thee, hero,
Of all thy gen'rous labours ne'er deny'd,
But oft repeated to restore the wretched.
Shall thy distress'd Medea be the first
Thou dost refuse to aid?

Jas. It is too late.

She cast me from her and we now are strangers.

First Colc. I have been long a traveller with time,
And through unnumber'd evils have I noted
Those born of anger to be most deplor'd.
Thou look'st no longer on that mutual care—
Your children's welfare. In the wrathful Jason
Benignity is lost, ev'n nature dead
In the fond father.

Jas. When I nam'd our children,
Her ear was deafen'd, and her scornful tongue
Was sharpen'd into outrage.

First Colc. See them here,
The lively patterns of their mother's graces,
And sharers in misfortune.

Enter the Children.

Eldst Child. Art thou found
At last, my father? In thy search we pass'd
Through frightful waters, and in roaring winds,
Come to our mother, who of thee complains;
And with a promise never more to leave us,
Speak comfort to her.

Jas. Comfort!

First Colc. Dost thou shrink
To see these pledges of a love like her's?
Oh! thou obdurate, who hast thrown the beauties
Of virtue from thee in thy youthful season,
When ev'ry soft sensation is most warm,
To clasp the cold deformity of guilt!
I have no offspring—Must an old man's eyes
Teach thine their tender lesson? Must a heart,
Which time and ills and care might well have fear'd,
Teach thee affection, and a parent's feeling?

Jas. Support me rather, than depress me, Colchian.
I sink—My soul, dissolving in affection,
Hath quite unmann'd me.

Eldst Child. Dost thou grieve to see us?

Jas. No, my poor boys. My spirit bows before you
In love and rev'rence. These indeed subsist
A common care exacting all regard.
What shall I say?—Not cruel would I seem,
Not ev'n severe—Yet Colchian, let me ask;
Will she

First Colc. Command her; she is all submission.

Jas. Will she commit them to my charge, that comfort,
Prosperity and honour be their portion.

Eldst Ch. Ah! do not take us from our mother's arms.

Youngest Ch. From our kind mother. Leave us.

Eldst Child. Leave us here to weep with her.

Jas. How constant are these children,
But they were never harass'd by her scorn.

Enter Medea, Colchians, and Phæacians.

Med. (Stopping short.) The man who knew, and yet de-
spis'd my worth,

I see

I see before me—Still, thou restiff heart,
Still dost thou rise tumultuous in my bosom?
Oh! thou must bend.

Jas. Well, daughter of Æetes;
Lo! I am here obedient to thy call.

Med. Once was the time, when Jason would have come
Uncall'd, unprompted, but by love alone.
Why do I bring the wasted glass of joy
Back to my view! Oh! torture of remembrance!
Oh; Jason! Jason!

Jas. Speak.

Med. I cannot speak.

Jas. (*aside.*) My spirit yields—this mute distress o'er-
whelms me.

Med. Is it decreed to separate thy name
From mine for ever?—First to all restore me,
Which I relinquish'd for thee, to my country,
The veneration which that country paid me,
My injur'd parents, and their lost affection.
To my untainted, virgin fame restore me,
My once-untroubled, unrepublishing thoughts,
Impossible—Then hear, and yet be just.

Jas. (*aside.*) Oh! that this morning she had thus ad-
dress'd me!

Med. Not love alone, not Hymen's common ties,
But fame and conquest, mutual toils and hardships,
All, which is marvellous and great, conspir'd
To make us one. What stars in distant skies,
What seas, what shores unvisited before
Have we not seen together! And what perils
Could each inhospitable clime present,
From which Medea hath not sav'd her Jason?
Our toils at length surmounted, must we part?
My lord—My husband—Father of these boys!
Shame, anguish, desperation rush upon me!
They bind my heart in adamant woe!
They weigh me down—They bear me to the earth.

(*Kneeling with the children.*)

Thus low behold the issue of the Sun
Imploring pity of the man, who scorn'd her.

Jas. Canst thou, O Juno, from thy neighb'ring temple
View this illustrious sufferer at my feet,
Nor swift destruction from thy altar show'r
On my perfidious head? Why rather, goddess,
Didst thou not blast me, when, by furies guided,

I rati- he

M E D E A.

27

ratify'd but now th' unhallow'd contract ?

Med. (rising.) What hast thou said ?

Jas Crensa—is my wife. (*He starts at Medea's looks, then fixes his eyes stedfastly upon her, and, after some time, proceeds.*)

Medea—Ha ! Have sense and motion left her ?

Her colour dies, which once outshone the morn !

Those radiant eyes, whose majesty proclaim'd

The Sun's own progeny, withdraw their lustre !

Oh ! thou most injur'd, utter thy complaints ;

Give words to anger, and to sorrow tears !

Med. Astonishment ! What prodigy is there ?

Look yonder !

First Col. Go—go, children, to the temple ;

Avoid this fight.

(*The Children are led off by a Phæacian to the temple.*)

Med. What wonderful appearance

floats on the main, and stems the lofty surge ?

Jas. O execrable perfidy ! which fills

The noblest heart with pangs, the most enlighten'd mind
with madness !

Med. See, where yon snowy concave in its bosom,
Collecting all the motion of the winds,

Drives the huge burthen to th' affrighted shore !

Jas. O had the flood, she sees in frantic thought,
Engulph'd that bark !

Med. (advancing towards him.) What art thou, most
presumptuous,

Who dar'st approach the limits of this region ?

Hast thou not heard, that bulls with brazen feet,

And sleepless dragons guard the fatal soil ?

He hears unterrify'd—I ne'er beheld

Such majesty and grace.

Jas. Debas'd, deform'd

By guilt's polluting hand !

Med. He speaks—What music !

He claims the golden fleece—What means this warmth,

Which prompts my hand to give the radiant prize ?

But wilt thou prove then constant—ever kind ?

Must, I will believe thee.

First Col. What remorse,

What consternation petrify his frame !

And he grows wilder

Med. Hark ! With flaming throats

The bulls begin to roar ! The forest trembles

And

And see, the dragon hither points his course !
 See, his huge pinions beat the tortur'd air !
 His monstrous body rolls the blast before him,
 And sails amidst a whirlwind ! Dost thou droop ?
 Be not dismay'd, my hero ! Stand behind.
 Attend ye demons, whose contagious breath
 Defiles the sun, who chill the fiercest heart,
 And lock in drowsy sloth the nerves of strength !

Jas. Assume thy terrors—Moulder me to dust.
 Now call thy demons, whose infernal grasp
 May snatch and hurl me to my destin'd pains.
 Let me stretch'd on torn Ixion's wheel,
 Or chain'd in burning adamant endure
 The tooth of vipers, and the scorpion's sting ;
 Oh ! rather, rather, than behold thy sufferings !

Med. Why art thou pale and languid ? Thou art safe !
 The slumb'ring monster drops his scaly wings !
 Thine is the fleece—Medea too is thine !

[Jason throws himself back, and is received by the Colchians.]

Confusion and amazement !—Is he vanish'd ?
 Where am I ?—On a rock, a desert cliff,
 Which overhangs the unfrequented waves ;
 No plant, but moss, to hide its craggy sides ;
 No shelter nigh my tempest-beaten head :
 And lo ! two infants clinging to my knees,
 Who join my grief, and call Medea mother !
 O thou false hero, whither art thou fled ?
 Hark—The wind only answers my complaint,
 It is the sea, which murmurs to my groans !
 Ha ! what art thou, grim shape, embur'd with gore ?
 Why dost thou wave that Stygian torch around ?
 Art thou revenge from Tartarus enlarg'd
 To aid Medea ? Come then, shake thy brand
 Before my steps ! To perpetrate thy mischief
 The winds shall lend their swiftness, hell its fiends,
 The sea its fury, and the Sun his flames !

First Colc. Resume thy courage.

Jas. Yes, my soul emerges
 From dark confusion, now she knows the worst.
 My sight is clear'd, my enterprise resolv'd,
 And hope enlarges my advent'rous spirit.

First Colc. I hear in wonder, prince. At least prepare
 thee

To guard Medea in her new distress,
 Whom Creon threatens to expel.

M E D E A.

9

Jas. The priests will be her safeguard till . . .

First Colc. Restrain thy speech,
and look behind thee. He is sent from Creon
To drive her hence. *Enter Lycander.*

Jas. Lycander!

Lyc. Prince, allow me
With this old Colchian to confer a moment.

First Colc. Nay, speak aloud.

Lyc. Thou know'st my errand, Colchian.

First Colc. Yes, if our prince's willingly depart not,
Thou wilt by force remove her.

Jas. Base and impious!

How should these hands, which yok'd the brazen bulls,
Divide thy limbs, and hurl the mangled fragments
From yonder promontory's brow to feast
The scaly monsters in the flood below;
It were a righteous sacrifice to justice:
But thou art brother to the good Theano.

Lyc. Whom thou dost wrong in me. By her consent,
And on Medea's promise to depart,
I came to guide her with respectful care
To Corinth's verge. Compassion for this princess,
Dread of the king, and reverence for the goddess,
With all thy changes, prince, perplex my course;
That through the maze of this eventful day
We ne'er shall tread securely.

Jas. Nay, Lycander,
If thou art blameless . . .

Lyc. Stop. The king is here
To widen this confusion. *Enter Creon and attendants.*

Creon [entering.] I am told,
That with a pensive mien he left the palace,
And join'd a Colchian of Medea's train.
Gods! he is here—disorder'd—with Lycander
And that old stranger—all in sullen silence
At my appearance—Jason—He replies not!

What are your consultations? Speak Lycander!

Lyc. My liege, I cannot, uninform'd like thee.

Creon. Then, as a king and father, I demand
Of thee, Thessalian hero, why, confus'd
At my approach, thy countenance is fall'n?

Jas. At thy approach? More formidable pow'rs
Could never awe this heart, which nought hath vanquish'd
But its own frailties.

Creon. Visions!

D

Jas.

Jas.

Jas. Hear with patience.
 The tutelary deity of Corinth
 Sits here in awful judgment. Virtue pleads,
 And pity weeps before her. Thou and I
 At this tribunal show our guilty heads.
 Long have we slumber'd on the couch of folly;
 Let us awaken from the cheating dream,
 Nor each rebuke the other for his weakness,
 But acquiesce in Juno's just decree.
 I must annul my contract with thy daughter,
 And bid her now eternally farewell.

Cr.on. Eternally farewell! I dream—Lycander,
 Is not Medea gone?

Lyc. My lord, the time

Creon. Inactive traitor! Go and seize that fiend!

Jas. [to *Creon*]. Hold. Thou esteem'st me still the gen-
 The pliant vassal of my father's will, (the Jalon,
 And thy ambition. I am chang'd—My heart
 Is full of tumult—New-created rage,
 Rage at myself, at Æson too and thee
 Now ravages my bosom—I hen be counsel'd,
 Nor tempt the wild, ungovernable transports
 Of one distemper'd with a foul assemblage
 Of guilt, despair and shame.

Creon. Presumptuous boy!
 Do thy exploits by sorcery atchiev'd,
 Do thy rude trophies from barbarians won,
 Exalt thy pride to brave a Grecian monarch?
 When now, from all inheritance expell'd,
 A needy exile, thou hast no support,
 But from my throne, whole patronage is granted
 To thy imploring father.

Jas. I reject it,
 And own no patron, but my sword and name.
 Can I want aid, the Argonautic leader?
 While Hercules, while Telamon and Peleus,
 While sacred Orpheus, and the twins of Leda,
 Remain unconquer'd to assert my cause?
 Why do I measure folly back to folly,
 And here degrade my honours and renown
 What boasts resembling thine? Farewel for ever.

Creon. Ha! I perceive this purpose. Haste, collect
 A faithful hand; secure Medea's vessel.
 Ye blackest demons of resentment, rise;
 March by my side, and brandish you my sceptre!
 Thou shut the city-gates! Let none depart

Without my licence ! I will hold him still,
And cast him prostrate at Creusa's feet ! *Enter Theano.*

Thea. I heard thy threat'ning voice, O blindly fix'd
In disobedience to the queen of gods.

Creon. Dar'st thou, sole auth'ress of thy sov'reign's ills,
Confront his anger ? First on thee, confed'rate *(To Lyc.*
With this rebellious, shall my vengeance fall.
By thy design'd misconduct Jason twice
Hath sen Medea.

Lyc. Chance, or heav'n's appointment.
Not my contrivance

Creon. Seize and drag him hence ;
Low in a dungeon hide him ; chain him down
In damps and darkness !

Lyc. Citizens of Corinth,
This place is holy ! In the name of Juno
I claim protection !

Thea. Universal rev'rence,
From your forefathers at the birth of Corinth,
Hath guarded still th' inviolable grove.

Creon. Do ye recoil, ye cowards ? Rebel, traitor,
I will assemble those shall force this refuge,
The seat of priestly craft to aid sedition ;
When thou in torture shalt atone thy crime !

Thea. Once more I warn thee to revere a goddess.

Creon. No, I revere a god, the god of thunders !
Jove, thou didst toil for empire ; so shall Creon,
And show the earth a pattern of thy sway !
For empire thou thy father didst dethrone,
Thy Titan kindred plunge in deepest hell.
The giant lancing from his hundred hands
A hundred rocks to shake th' Olympian tow'rs.
Thou didst with labour vanquish ! Shall these shades
Which awe the vulgar, shall the ready prey
To ev'ry firebrand, or the woodman's ax,
Obstruct a king ? No, insolent revolters,
Soon shall you see me lift the bloody scourge
Of chastisement, unsheathe the sword of havoc,
And vindicate my glory ! *(Exit cum suis.)*

Thea. Impious man !
Do thou consult thy safety.

Lyc. Be not anxious.
The king's own rashness shall secure Lycander.
Though years may roll on years, ere we again
Shall meet in peace.

Enter Jason.
Jas.

Jas. Medea to thy temple
Is fled from all her virgins, who entreat
Thy kind permission to pursue her steps,
Where'er her frenzy leads!

Tiea. My help is ready.
And to thy guardian care I trust my brother,
Whom Creon threatens with immediate death.
Yet something whisper, something sure divine,
That other clouds of black events will break,
Ere a new morning rise on troubled Corinth.

Lyc. Whate'er this mystic language may import,
Prince, give attention.

Jas. Speak

Lyc. Thy only course
Is to embark from Corinth with Medea.

Jas. It was my secret and determin'd purpose.

Lyc. Nor yet a secret. Our suspicious tyrant,
If he could rule his discontented subjects,
Would stop thy passage. But thy just design
The public shall besfriend by me alarm'd
At Creon's threat to violate the grove.

Jas. Can I requite thee?

Lyc. Let me serve thee first;
Requite me after, as my wants may dictate.
Is not thy father yonder?

Jas. Let him come.

Go and expect me shortly on the beach.

(Exit *Lyc.*)

Enter Jason.

Æf. What have I heard! Th' exasperated king . . .

Jas. Hath told the truth. His daughter I relinquish,

Æf. Off with this bridal pageantry, which mocks
With gay delusion my disastrous age.

Reach me again my fable; from thy hand

I will receive it: from thy barb'rous hand

Let dust be sprinkled on my joyless head.

Nay, rather turn invincible against me

Lock in that nervous gripe these snowy hairs;

And to the how'ring eagles on the beach

Cast my disfigur'd relicks! Dost thou pause?

Think'st thou, that Jason's father will be seen

Decrepid, tott'ring with distress and years,

A vagabond, a suppliant for protection

Among the happier princes? No, my son,

Though not like thee the faulchion I can wield,

And mow my foes before me, I can die! (dous goddess)

Jas. Com'st thou with threat'nings? That tremen-

Whose piercing eye from yonder fane discerns

Guile in its naked shape through ev'ry garb,
And marks ingratitude for signal vengeance,
Knows that we merit both to die; yet, dying,
We could not expiate our unmatched offence.

Æf. What unaccustom'd, terrifying sternness
Frowns on that aspect? Gentle have I known thee
From infancy to manhood, ne'er before
Have felt thee dreadful!

Jaf. Ever from thy fears
Wilt thou take counsel? Can the voice of pity,
Benevolence and equity convey
No admonition? O exalt thy thoughts
From this base earth, the mansion of deceit,
Of perjuries and crimes.

Nor be confounded at thy son's resolves.
By no persuasion, artifice or menace
My now reviving dignity of mind
From its own summit shall again descend.

Æf. What would my Jason?

Jaf. Take the holy priestess;
Repair to Creon: with united counsels
Him first from impious violence dissuade:
And then

Æf. To whose protection must I fly?

Jaf. To mine. Abandon Corinth, and at Thebes
Not three days march from these detested gates
Expect my presence. Hercules is there;
My friend, my soldier. He with ev'ry hero,
Who once obey'd my standard, will again
League their auxiliar swords and save Iolcos.
Let this suffice—If not—Persist no more.
Thy son is fix'd, immoveable as fate,

(*Thunder.*)

Æf. Thy mightier genius awes me! I submit!
We are all guilty—Juno so proclaims!
But Oh! amid these prodigies, my Jason,
Not one alarms me like the rude commotion,
Which shakes thy placid bosom! Be compos'd.
I will conduct Theano to the king.

(*Exit.*)

Look down, connubial goddess, and with hope.

(*Jaf. Turning towards the temple.*)

Let thy appear'd divinity indulge
A hero offering at thy holy shrine,
His spirit humbled with repentant sighs.
You to attend, ye favourable gales,
And swiftly waft us to the kind embrace

Of our companion, Orpheus; who shall breathe
 Distraction's rage, till new-born reason smile.
 Then with her children lovely, as the mother,
 Shall blooming Tempe on its flow'ry lap
 Again receive her;
 And I once more along th' accustom'd vale
 Shall, by the lustre of the silent moon,
 Walk by her side attentive, while her tongue
 Unfolds the powers of heav'n's resplendent train
 Of magic numbers, and mysterious spells,
 And feasts with knowledge my enraptur'd soul. (Exit)

ACT V. Theano descending from the temple; Æson, &c

Æs. **W**HERE is the priestess, Colchian?
First Colc. There descending.

Pale consternation overcasts her visage.

Thea. O most portentous, execrable sight!
 I led the virgins to rejoin your princes,
 Who had escap'd their care—Mysterious heav'n!
 Where was thy pow'r to check a mother's rage?
 Where was thy mercy, when her savage hand
 Unclos'd the jaws of slaughter on her children?

Æs. Oh! all-surpassing evil!

First Colc. When and how? Oh! speak!

Thea. A knife of sacrifice she seiz'd,
 And in their tender bosoms plung'd its point!
 We found her planted near their weltring limbs;
 Her fiery eye balls on their wounds were fix'd;
 A ghastly triumph swell'd her wild revenge,
 And madness mingled smiles with horror! Æs. Horror
 Is my companion now! The race of Jason
 One common crime hath swallow'd in its gulph!

Thea. The goddess bow'd in pity from her shrine;
 When straight a voice, oracular in thunder,
 Whose awful clamour must have reach'd your ears,
 Peal'd o'er the rocking temple. "Impious Creon,"
 The voice proclaim'd "thy guilt hath fill'd its measure
 "Then fall, thou victim to the gods of hell!"

Æs. Tremendous sentence! *Thea.* I, with fearful step
 Haste to the palace. Æs. Make me thy associate

And I to calm his violence will join. *Ex. Theano and Æson*

Medea rushing from the temple, Phæacians following.

First Colc. Behold, where, dropping with her children's blood
 The lost Medea comes!

Med. It is begun!

Now to complete my vengeance will I mount

The burning chariot of my bright forefather;
 The rapid steeds o'er Corinth will I drive,
 And with the scatter'd lightnings from their manes
 Consume its walls, its battlements and tow'rs,
 Its princes, people, palaces and temples!
 Then, as the flames embrace the purple clouds,
 And the proud city crumbles from its base,
 The demon of my rage and indignation
 All grim and wrapt in terror shall beside
 The mountainous embers, and denounce abroad
 To gods and men my wrongs, and my revenge!
First Colc. How is thy wisdom exil'd from thy breast.
 Its native seat, nor leaves one trace behind
 To show it once was there!

Med. Weep'st thou, old man?
 Ha! speak; thou venerable mourner, speak
 Thy cause of anguish! Hadst thou not a daughter
 Wife like Minerva, like the morning fair,
 And once thy dearest comfort? Hath she left thee,
 Left thy decrepid head for grief to seize
 And dash against the tomb?

First Colc. Thou dost mistake me for the stern Æetes,
 I am but one among th' unnumber'd Colchians,
 Who mourn in thee their nation's glory fall'n.

Med. I well deserve this pity—yours—and yours,
 Who kindly weep around me. As I pass,
 I wade through seas of tears—I hear no sound
 But sighs and groans from sorrow-beaten breasts.
 Dishevell'd fragments of uprooted hairs
 From the wild head of anguish fly about me!
 Is it not sitting? When Medea mourns,
 Shall not the skies assume their blackest robes,
 And scowl upon mankind? Medea sighs;
 Shall not hell groan, and heav'n reply in thunder?
 It is the offspring of the Sun, who wrings
 Her helpless hands, who rends her scatter'd locks!
 My heart is cold—The thread of life unwinds.
 Now triumph, death—Thy conquest is Medea!

[*She sinks into the lap of a Phæacian.*]

First Colc. Repose her harass'd limbs with tend'rest care
 If this delirious transport be no more,
 Than some short tumult of the heated brain;
 Refreshing sleep may cool that seat of thought,
 And wand'ring reason sojourn there again.
 Essay your vocal pow'r, harmonious maids;
 Some new and soothing modulation choose;

Dress in persuasive melody your numbers,
Whose artful cadence from the breaking heart
May steal its cares, and fold them in oblivion.

A Phæacian turning towards the sea.

Azure god, whose active waters

[Trochaics.]

Beat with endless toil below,

Calm the ruder blasts to slumber;

While to yonder grove, which bends

Stately o'er thy shaded bosom,

Softly-sighing gales aspire

And, ye zephyrs, which ascending

Fan the plummy verdure there,

Lulling whispers, drowsy murmurs

Through the trembling foliage breathe

O'er the wakeful brow of sorrow

Care beguiling sleep to spread.

Or my gently-soothing measure

On your downy pinions bear

Through the grief distemper'd spirit

With delusion sweet to steal,

Till, on music's lap dissolving,

Madness lull its weary head.

First Colc. Your queen recovers, and her look serene
Shows, the mild beam of reason shines anew.

Med. Grief, as o'erlabour'd with its cruel office,
Awhile is pausing, till its strength return.

I will at least possess the short relief

To see my infants. Sure, my faithful friends,

From my sad heart no evils can erase

Maternal gladness at my childrens' sight.

Go, lead them from the temple—They will smile,

And lift my thoughts to momentary joy.

Not gone my virgins? wherefore this delay?

Why all aghast? Why tremble thus your limbs?

Ha! whence this blood? My hands are dipt in slaughter.

Speak, ye dumb oracles of terror, speak!

(Rising.)

Where are my children? My distracted brain

A thousand dreadful images recalls

Imperfectly remember'd—Speak I charge you!

Where are my children?—Silent still and pale!

Enough—Fell pow'rs, your purpose is accomplish'd;

Medea's sufferings are complete and full!

First Colc. The swelling passions struggle in her breast,

And find no vent. My ever honour'd mistress,

This is the time for tears and exclamations.

Med. Can exclamations down the wind convey

From these retentive ears my childrens' groans ?
Or can this murd'rous hand by tears be whiten'd ?

First Colc. It was the act of ignorance and madness.

Just Themis knows thy purity of mind,
And will with pity cleanse that erring hand.

Med. Not the disburthen'd sluices of the skies,
The wat'ry nereids with the ocean's store,
Nor all the tears, which misery hath shed,
Can from the mother wash her children's blood !

Where shall I hide me from the piercing day ?
What man will grant protection to my guilt,
What god afford me safeguard to his altar ?
Thou must alone receive me, thou, O earth !
Then, while I crush my bosom on thy surface,
And grasp the dust within my struggling hands,
Distain my limbs, and strike my head against thee,
At length in pity of my sufferings sue
The loit'ring gods to rear the friendly bolt,
And close my sorrows on thy peaceful breast !

First Colc. See Jason too unconscious of his loss !

Enter Jason. *Jas.* Is she restor'd ?

First Colc. Restor'd to full sensation
Of her increas'd affliction, there she lies.

Jas. Perhaps she sleeps ! *Locking attentively on Medea.*

First Colc. Ah ! no. *Jas.* Then, dearest woman,
Look on me, hear me, trust me once again.
I have resign'd Creusa and her kingdom ;
I have appeas'd my father ; Creon's wrath
Is ineffectual now : then deign to cast
One glance on Jason, on thy suppliant husband
Return'd in tears of penitence and shame,
But with redoubled tenderness and truth !

Med. Oh ! Jason—Thou and I have once been happy
What are we now ? *Jas.* Let thy forgiving breath
Revive my courage fettered yet and tame
With thy displeasure, and my active love
Shall soon transport thee from this seat of woe ;
Then, as we bound before the fav'ring gale
Shall fondly whisper, we may still be happy !

Med. [*Starting up*] Survey these hands !

Jas. What blood is this ? *Med.* Thy childrens'.

Jas. Inhuman Creon ! Could thy malice choose
No other victims than my blameless boys ?
I come, incens'd Corinthians, to divulge
This profanation through your madding streets ;
Myself will guide your torrent of revolt,

And welcm its bil'wos on this royal savage!

Med. If heav'n had once meant kindly to Medea,
Some tyrant had been found, some other hand,
Than hers alone to spill her children's blood!
The season for upbraiding is no more;
But know, thou wretched like myself, that madness
Arm'd my blind rage against them, and the deed
Now weighs me down to everlasting night!

Jas. [*falli'g on his knees*] O thou, whole equal balance to
Distributes justice, and restoring mercy, (mankind
If pray'rs from this polluted breast may reach
Thy pure abode, exert thy righteous pow'r;
Drop thy assuaging pity on her heart;
On me exhaust the quiver of thy vengeance?

Med. Was not my portion of distresses large,
Ye pow'rs obdurate? Hark this heart refus'd
To sigh, these eyes been sparing of their streams?
Impell'd by indignation, still my spirit
Would challenge your injustice, which requir'd
My childrens' blood to mingle with my tears.

Take back the mighty mind you fram'd to break,
First rent by anguish, then by guilt deform'd!

[*Draws a poinard.*]

[*A voice from the temple.*] Hold offspring of the Sun,
arise; repair

To Juno's shrine; reply not but obey.

" *Med.* Malignant goddess, to prolong my pain

" Dost thou unbrace the firmness of my arm! *drops dag.*

" Yes to accuse thee at thy shrine I come!

" The guardian thou of marriage, hast permitted

" The violation of connubial faith;

" And from that shrine didst pitiless behold

" The fruit of marriage by a mother's hand

" Dash'd on thy pavement! (*Thunder and lightning.*

" Yes amidst thy lightnings

" And triple bolted thunder shalt thou hear

" My execrations to provoke thy terrors;

" Who, single auth'ress of Medea's wrongs,

" Dost now suspend the period of her woes. [*Exit Med.*]

Jas. Celestial presence, I adore thy greatness;
Yet thy tremendous voice, which rocks these bulwarks,
Appals not me, who bid destruction welcome!
Hope which cements the structure of the heart,
From mine is moulder'd, and despair is lodg'd
Within the ruins. [*He falls.* Enter Lycander.

Lyc. Gods! what new reverse

Hath cast the first of heroes to the earth?
 Thy mariners expect thee; haste away.
 Too high the ferment rises! Oh! recall
 Theano's last presage of black events!
 The wild impatience of religious rage
 Stings ev'ry bosom! Rise, prince,
 I must attend thy flight. Our timely absence
 Will save our streets from homicide!

Jas. No, death may reach me too!

Lyc. For pity—Ha! the skies
 Share in our tumult, and a bloody veil
 Hangs o'er the sick'ning sun! The air wheels round us!
 Grim Neptune yonder shakes his stormy trident!
 Why heaves the loosen'd rock? Why drop these clouds
 In threatening murmurs from their dusky folds
 Streak'd with sulphureous gleams?

[Thunder, lightning, and the stage darken'd.]

Jas. *[r. sing]* This suits my soul
 For its infernal journey all prepar'd,
 A pale attendant on my children's ghosts
 In Tartarus to dwell, while they repose
 In blest Elysium! *First Cole.* Look, the holy priestess
 Breaks from the palace in disorder'd haste,
 And o'er her temple flies! In consternation
 Old Æson too is nigh.

Æs. My son! my son! *Enter Æson and Thessalians.*

Jas. If thou dost bring fresh evils thou art welcome;

Æs. We found the harden'd king! My words were vain,
 So were Theano's! With a desp'rate band,
 Of lie regardless, and contemning Juno,
 Against her grove he sallies!

Creon. *(behind the scene.)* Since no longer
 You dread my scepter, you shall feel my sword;

Lyc. The king's rash voice. He charges.

[A shout within.]

[Thunder and lightning.]

Æs. Hideous roar! O Jove, be merciful!

Lyc. He gives the signal,
 And shows the tumult through those livid flames!

Jas. I hear the clang of arms! Unmov'd and cold,
 My heart the rejects that once-enlivening sound,
 And sighs for dissolution! Pause awhile,
 Sad spirit, till Medea's fate is known,
 Then prompt my sword to justice on myself!

Æs. That shout denounces triumph!

Lyc. Yes, and safety,
 To all but Creon. Give the torrent way!

*Enter Corinthians.**(bring*

First Cor. Where is the honour'd priestess? We will
If she so wills, the sacrilegious head
Of our slain tyrant to her sacred feet!

Lyc. Be silent all! Theano from the goddess
To this assembly moves! Night flies before her;
Earth, seas, and heav'n's are calm'd!

Enter Theano.

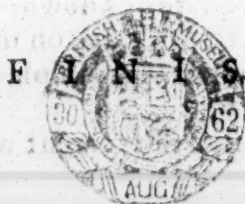
Thea. Ye sons of Corinth,
Old men of Colchis and Thessalians, hear!
At length the gods restrain their vengeful rod!
The dreadful scene is clos'd! Iochian prince,
Thou from Æetes' daughter art disjoin'd!
Look, where the goddess through th' aerial champain
Sends in a chariot drawn by winged dragons,
That all transcending women into climes
Remote, but whither is from thee conceal'd! [*Thunder.*

Enter Medea in a chariot.

"*Med.* Fine breathing couriers through the fields of air,
" Arrest your course obedient to this wand;
" Ah! what detains me longer in the fight
" Of hateful Corinth? but on thee to cast
" A parting look, and some forgiving tears.
" Shed on thy errors, Jason — Oh farewell!
" Constrain'd by Juno and my parent gods,
" Who have subdu'd my anger, not my grief.
" O'er seas and earth to wander and explore (*Thunder,*
" The devious steps of destiny I go. (*Exit in the chariot.*"

Jas. Heav'n guide her fortunes. This shall govern
mine. (*Offers to fall on his sword, but is prevented.*

Thea. Unmanly desperation! Will the grave
Hide thy disgrace; or ill-tongu'd rumour die,
When thou art ashes? No. Recal thy manhood!
Thou hast a father's kingdom to redeem!
Go, save a nation! These afflicted maids,
These aged Colchians to their homes restore.
Thus shall the censure, which thy frailty merits,
Be chang'd to blessings on thy gen'rous deeds,
And time's light finger loosen from thy breast
Its root of care, till peace of mind return! (*Exeunt omnes.*



ing
will

der,
air,

der,
st."
era
ted.

net.